

## Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

----- 119094

R 160556Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3170

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 1356

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJECT: CENTURION TANKS

REF: THE HAGUE 843

1. ON MARCH 13 ISRAELI AMBASSADOR BAR-ON SOLICITED  
MY INTERVENTION IN OBTAINING US REQUEST TO GON FOR RELEASE OF 65-80  
MARK I AND/OR MARK II CENTURION TANKS FOR EVENTUAL ACQUISITION  
BY ISRAEL.

2. BAR-ON SAID THAT HE HAD APPROACHED MOD VREDELING  
IN LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER 1973 REGARDING  
ISRAELI ACQUISITION OF SEMI-MOTHBALLED CENTURIONS  
IN DUTCH INVENTORY TO WHICH US RETAINS TITLE. HE  
THOUGHT MOST WERE MARK I AND BELIEVED NUMBER WAS  
BETWEEN 65 AND 80. HE IS INTERESTED IN AS MANY TANKS  
AS CAN BE RELEASED AND SAID ISRAEL WOULD BE GLAD TO  
TAKE UP TO 200. BAR-ON INDICATED VREDELING FAVORED  
TRANSACTION BUT SAID HE COULD TAKE NO ACTION UNTIL  
SPECIFIC REQUEST RE EIVED FROM US. BAR-ON HAD SO  
ADVISED HIS GOVERNMENT AND PRESUMED THIS INFORMATION  
HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED TO US.

3. IN DECEMBER BAR-ON SAID VREDELING TOLD HIM NO  
REQUEST HAD AS YET BEEN RECEIVED FROM US AND HE HAD  
THEREFORE TAKEN NO ACTION. APPARENTLY BAR-ON HAS NOW  
RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO PROCEED IN THIS MATTER.

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(THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED

LOCALLY ON ISSUE.)

4. WITHOUT INDICATING THIS MATTER HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN  
DISCUSSED IN THE EMBASSY, I TOLD BAR-ON I WOULD RELAY  
HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST TO WASHINGTON AND BE IN  
TOUCH WITH HIM IN DUE COURSE. I ADDED THAT TIMING  
OF HIS REQUEST SEEMED UNFORTUNATE IN VIEW OF THE  
PENDENCY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE OIL BOYCOTT.  
OBVIOUSLY NEITHER US NOR GON WOULD WISH TO MAKE ANY  
OVERT ANTI-ARAB GESTURES WHICH COULD JEOPARDIZE  
ELIMINATION OF BOYCOTT. ONE WOULD HAVE TO ASSUME THAT  
MERE DISCUSSION OF PROPOSITION WOULD BE LEAKED TO PRESS.  
I SAID IN MY JUDGMENT VREDELING WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO ACT  
ON THE MATTER HIMSELF WITHOUT DISCUSSION WITHIN  
COUNCIL OF MNISTERS, AT LEAST WITH PRIME MINISTER  
AND FOREIGN MINISTER. THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS IN FOREIGN  
MINISTRY WHO WOULD BE CONCERNED OVER INITIATION OF  
ANTI-ARAB ACTIVITY BY GON. IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY  
THAT MATTER COULD BE KEPT FROM THEM AND, THEREFORE,  
IT WOULD EVENTUALLY SURFACE IN MEDIA WITH  
POSSIBLE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS FOR BOTH GON  
AND US.  
GOULD

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY EQUIPMENT, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES)  
**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CENTURION TANKS  
**TAGS:** MASS, NL, IS, US, XF, (BAR-ON), (VREDELING, MOD)  
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